



Good Afternoon,

I am writing with regards to my concerns involving the discussion of HB 6574 – An Act Concerning Municipal Youth Camps. As a full-time employee for a small municipality, the burden that the required regulations would impose on our department are substantial. Some items of concern for our department include the need to have an APRN/Physician on retainer. The additional costs incurred from this requirement would force us to raise our prices and eliminate certain households from attending. Last summer we saw an exponential increase in families requesting financial support for their children. Raising costs would further increase this demand that we unfortunately cannot accommodate. Additionally, the requirement of collecting public health and immunization records from all campers and staff is incredibly burdensome to a department with only two full time staff. I also question the potential pushback from citizens in our community in having to provide sensitive health information to participate.

Currently, all staff is required to have fingerprinting/background checks done through our local police department. Requiring municipalities to incur an additional cost of \$88.25 for every new staff member further increases our expenses and forces us to raise our camp rates. In recent years we have seen a trend in employee retention decreasing, which means we will likely have to pay for quite a few background checks each year. For large municipalities this is astronomical, when we are already struggling with the continual increase in minimum wage, while trying to keep costs low for our communities.

For our facility specifically, the ability to have a quarantine/isolation site with a private toilet/sink is just not feasible. We are an outdoor camp with no way to effectively quarantine/isolate. Again, to provide this would incur an additional expense that will have to be pushed back to families.

I also question if OEC and DCF have the necessary staff to handle licensing should this bill pass. If we are being forced to comply with new regulations and guidelines, and incur an additional burden, both staffing and cost wise, I would appreciate knowing that OEC and DCF will also be doing their due diligence and hiring additional staff to meet the needs of their new clients.

Finally, the requirements for such positions as first aid director and waterfront director will incur an additional burden across municipalities. We are already struggling to find qualified candidates for director level camp positions and creating an age requirement for additional director level positions creates another barrier to providing our camp services.

Municipal camps have been operating for years and years under their own checks and balances system. The benefits of summer camp programming on children are more important than ever, as youth continue to adjust back to normalcy after multiple years of COVID isolation. Our camps provide an affordable option for families looking for childcare supervision during the summer months. Forcing additional requirements and burdens on municipalities will force us to raise costs for the families we support in our community and unfortunately in turn make summer camp unaffordable for many families across the state. It is hard to portray the multitude of benefits summer camp programming provides to its participants (both children and staff), but it is easy to state that they are a necessary function in our society. I hope that those in discussion with this bill will take into consideration the feelings and concerns of those working in municipal government, as we truly want what is best for our community.

Thank you for your consideration,

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